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Prof Henry Mitchell

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1862.

Propositions of a water painter

P O E M S

BY

A PAINTER

John Water,

Seance

P O E M S

BY

A PAINTER

"Of muses, Hobbinoll, I come no skill,
For they bene daughters of the highest love,
And holden scorn of homely shepheards' quill;
For sith I heard that Pau with Phœbus strove,
Which him to much rebuke and daunger drove,
I never list presume to Parnasse hill,
But pypping low in shade of lowly grove,
I play to please myselfe, all be it ill,"

The Shepherd's Calender.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS

EDINBURGH AND LONDON

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PREFATORY NOTE

To account for the somewhat discrepant modes of thought and expression observable in many of the poems in this Volume, the Author thinks it right to state that the period of their production has extended over many years,—the greater number of them, indeed, having been written in very early life, and without any view to publicity.

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POEMS BY A PAINTER.

SYRINX.

SLOWLY the sunshine faded from the hill,
And dewy twilight found him bending still,
With hand on heart—as one who inly bleeds
From a deep wound—beside the trembling reeds.
Slowly love's star swam up, in bright unrest
Far-throbbing o'er Lampeia's purple crest.
Slowly, above the pine-wood's deepening shade,
White Artemis arose, as half afraid
To view the mighty sorrow she had made;

Arose, and gazed upon him silently ;
Then, sloping sadly down the western sky,
Sank with a dreary murmur ; leaving him
In darkness by the river's shadowy brim,
Moveless and silent as an oak o'erthrown
In some old forest ;—till a hollow groan
Shuddered athwart the midnight. Syrx heard
Her lover's voice, and half in sorrow stirred—
And stirring sighed—and sighing sought to twine
Her leaves about him, lying there supine
In utter loneliness !

The ruthless sound,
The tender motion, from his deathly swoond
Of anguish roused him. Starting up, he cried
Aloud, “ Thou lov'st me ! They shall not divide—
Those envious gods—the lover from his bride !
Thou shalt be mine ! to dwell with me afar
In leafy places, where nor moon nor star
Can watch our joy : save by our own glad eyes,
For ever unespied ! Yes ! thou art mine :

My sylvan queen ! I trowed thou couldst not know
'Twas Pan that loved—and scorn him. But, ah, woe !
Into the dark I stretch my arms in vain
To clasp thee ; vacant they come back again !
In vain I call thee ; to my yearning cry
The rocks alone make faint and far reply,
Or this hot life-blood surging audibly
About my listening heart ! . . .

The stars look down,
The old, familiar stars ! The solem crown
Of Erymanthus cleaves the purple gloom ;
About my feet the beetles crisp and boom,
And there the thymy grass is all a-gleam
With glow-worms, as of old ! It is no dream !
No dream !—Ai ! ai ! I shall behold no more
Thy whiteness shame the lilies by the shore
Of broad Alpheios, while his amorous wave
Fawns at thy feet, alluring thee to lave
In his green coolness. Never more behold—
Couched in some root-woven antre mossy-old,

Deep in the cedarn forest's dim recesses—
The sunset burn within thy golden tresses,
Or flush with rosy fire from neck to heel
All thy disrobèd beauty. Zeus ! I reel,
Drunk with the maddening wine of love ! I die !
Life ebbs, despite my immortality,
From out my being !—ebbs, and leaves me dry
As the hot desert, empty as the wind,
And hungry as the sea ! Syrinx, be kind !
Where hid'st thou, sweet ? It cannot, shall not be,
These shivering reeds are all that lives of Thee !”

He ceased. There was a sighing in the air,
A flowery perfume breathing everywhere,
A stirring as of pinions, and the beat
On the husht ether of aërial feet ;
While from the region of the western star
Came, softly falling, music lovelier far
Than aught of earth : a weird, mysterious strain,
That o'er his aching heart and burning brain

Stole with cool ravishment, like summer rain
On the parched woodland, or the far-heard roar
Of coming waves along a thirsty shore.
Then softer, sweeter, in his tingling ears
There was a honeyed whispering ; and great tears
Burst forth benignant. Solemnly and slow
He bowed his shaggy front, and his fierce woe
Was lifted from him, as the music wound
In widening gyres of interwoven sound
Up through the thrilling darkness, till it died
Among the stars ; and, wave on wave, the tide
Of silence closed once more around him, fraught
With gentlest soothing, and some new, sweet thought
That on his haggard face, like sunshine, wrought
A radiant transformation. Silently
He raised his hands to heaven, and with a sigh
Slow-bending down, took a keen-edgèd stone
And tenderly the reed-stems, one by one,
Severed in sequent lengths, and side by side
Together placed, and with smooth rushes tied.

Then, breathless, hearkening for the muffled sound
Of the brown wood-bee, working underground,
Deftly a honey-weighted comb he found,—
Close by a willow root, where the white bosses
Of mushrooms glimmered, many-tinted mosses
Swelled softly, silver-fretted lichens clung,
And whirring night-moths in dim crannies hung
Screened by dark ivy,—and the wax did knead
In his hot palms, and stopt with cunning speed
Flute after flute. And so his task of love
At last was ended !

Meanwhile, far above,
Lycaios' topmost crags had caught the light,
That, like a fountain from the sacred height
Of clear Cyllene welling silently,
Told the dim valleys that the dawn was nigh.
From far Stymphalos came the dreary cry
Of wakening marsh-fowl, mingled with the fall
Of torrent waters, faint and musical,
In woody hollows. But by him unheard

Or fall of cataract, or wail of bird ;
By him the silver presage of the morn
Unseen ; far-wandering in a dream forlorn
Of lost delights, of joys that might have been,
Of wild regrets ! For, evermore, between
His vision and the dead reeds lying there
Within his listless hands, there came the hair—
The odorous, golden hair—the warm, soft hair
He grasped so vainly in that cruel chase ;
And, evermore, that pale and piteous face
Grew up before him, with its bright, young eyes,
Through drowning tears of terror and surprise,
Turned back imploring ; and its lips agape
With that long shriek of anguish, when escape
Grew hopeless.

“ ’Twas but yester eve ! The wood
Rang to her ringing laughter, as she stood
Half in the dancing sunshine, half in shade,
Her locks down-showering from their huntress’ braid ;
While round her feet the sylvan creatures played,

Lovely and fearless. Lovely and fearless she
As Dian's self ! And now ! ah, woe is me !
Arcadia knows her not. The mountain-side
Is bare of beauty ; valley and forest wide
Vacant of joy for ever ! And I—even I
Who loved her—have destroyed her ! I—even I,
Who would have cast my old divinity
Beneath her feet, to save one tiniest curl
On her white neck, one little, dewy pearl
Of her sweet mouth, from wrong !”

Once more he bowed
His head above the reeds, and wept aloud.
Not now for baffled passion was his plain ;
But wild remorse, contrition wild and vain
For her so sad undoing.—Though a trace
Of the old madness on his pallid face
Yet lingered, and within his desolate breast
Yet heaved the purple tide in sick unrest.
Then—even as one with secret guilt beguiled,
May touch the pure lips of a sinless child

Who loves him, all unweeting of his shame—
Softly he breathed the vanished Oread's name
Along the flutes. As in the caves of sleep
Lost voices call us fondly, till we weep
In that strange ecstasy where joy and woe,
Merged in one aimless ache, together flow
Down to the sea of rest, the Oread's low,
Mellifluous wail of yearning tenderness
Made liquid answer to his lips' caress,
As from the shore of Lethe, or the bound
Of far Elysium. At the wondrous sound,
So faint with love, so tremulous with regret,
Once more his cheeks with quiet tears were
wet,

And his fierce heart was chastened ; for he knew
Her soul was in the reeds, and gently drew
The poison from his wound, until the pain,
By sympathy transformed, through every vein
Pulsed with a tender sadness that now seemed
Sweeter than all the rapture he had dreamed.

A low wind rippling up the river came.
He raised his head. The sky was all a-flame
With rosy fire : young Eos was abroad
Upon the mountains ! Cliff and corrie glowed,
Far westward, with the palpitating blaze
Of topaz isled in tenderest chrysoprase.
And down the mighty gorges to the east—
Wine-dark or flusht with lucent amethyst—
Sloped the broad shafts of Phoibos. While the
 mist,
As from a thousand altars, upward curled
From tarn and cataract, and ghost-like, whirled
And flitted round the pines, and died away
In the sweet radiance of the new-born day.
Still all the narrow vales lay dewy-dark ;
And not a bird was stirring, save one lark
That high o'erhead, the blinding light up-winging,
Woke the clear echoes with enchanted singing :
A joyous descant, beautiful and strange,
For ever changing—sweeter every change !

He rose. The joy and glory of the hour
Were on his spirit. And the wondrous power,
Unfelt till now, of Utterance—born of love
And sorrow!—in his heart began to move.
Breathing into the reeds impassioned breath,
The conscious reeds made answer, and beneath,
His glowing lips and fingers glowed. That day
There was a new song in Arcadia!
A new song and a marvel!

From the spurs
Of old Lycaios, muffled in dark firs,
It seemed to moan. Now from the sunward
height

It warbled, tremulous with its own delight.
Now from some mossy dingle, with the sound
Of rushing water blent, it floated round
In liquid wailing. Now, far up the hill,
About the breezy crags, like laughter shrill
It rang, reverberant. Wide-wondering eyes
Stared from lone places with a bright surprise,

And wept for very joy—if joy it were
That thrilled the heart so strangely—as the air
Throbbled with the music. Wonder sweet and new
Fell on all woodland creatures, till they grew
Gentle as by enchantment. In the blue
The lark hung rapt in silence. Every noise
Of wind or water, every living voice,
Was softened, and an awful whisper ran
Throughout the listening valleys : IT IS PAN !

LOST LIFE.

I.

TIME's unreturning river
Flows moaning down for ever,
Through life and death towards that shadowy sea,
Within whose tideless deeps
The kraken-mystery sleeps :
The tranced ocean of Eternity !
I hear the fresh wind rippling in the leaves,
The swallows twitter round the barley-sheaves,
The homeward reapers in the setting sun
Sing merrily, their fragrant labour done ;
The bee, blue summer's joyous troubadour,
Carols for kisses to each damsel-flower ;
THY sweet voice fills this consecrated bower

With love's own music. But through all, through
all,

I hear the time-stream's desolating fall,

The eternal ocean's melancholy roar :

“The past returneth never, never more !”

II.

My youth was spent in folly ;

With vestal Melancholy

I walked abroad throughout this beauteous earth

Culling from all things fair

The poison of despair,

To murder in my breast the angel mirth ;

Scorning, for cold abstractions of the mind,

The gentle sympathies of human kind ;

Gazing on vague Ideals, till the eye

Grew blind to Nature ; ever wearily

Seeking afar the beauty round me strewn :

Till, in a world of joy, I stood alone,

In impious isolation. And though now—

Thanks to thy ministry !—my heart can glow
With late-found gladness, ghosts of buried woe
Will rise to scare me, even in hours like this,
And turn to gall the sweetness of thy kiss.

THE UNKNOWN PORTRAIT.

No. I.

SHADOW with the golden hair,
Phantom with the eyes of blue,
What wild thing of earth or air,
What bright creature pure and fair,
Shall my song compare with you?
Not the stately swan that gleams
At sunrise down the vale of streams;
Not the timid mountain hind,
Light of foot as summer wind;
Not the skylark, as she springs
From her nest on dewy wings,
And up the blue lift soaring sings;

Not the butterfly that dances

 All day long from flower to flower ;

Not the ephemeris that glances,

Fitful as a poet's fancies,

 O'er the tarn beside my bower,

Would I dare to match with you,

Phantom with the eyes of blue !

Nor the sweet young crescent moon

In the gloaming-heaven of June ;

Nor her shadow on the sea,

When the wind's low minstrelsy

Stirs him in his tranced sleep ;

Nor the rainbow-bells that leap

Where the fairy-fountain falleth,

Softly chiming, ever falleth

In the hollow of the granite,—

Mab's unbraided locks would span it !

Nor a gem of odorous dew

 In the bosom of a rose,

With the sunshine streaming through ;
Nor that saintliest flower that blows,
The virgin lily, as she bendeth
O'er some lake ere night descendeth ;
Nor the planet of the even,—
Of all fairest things in heaven
Or earth most spirit-like and fair—
With your beauty may compare,
Shadow with the golden hair !

All in vain my fancy strings
Names of earth's divinest things,
Fondly striving to express
Something of your loveliness ;
But that loveliness as far
Theirs transcends as doth the star
The dewdrop, or yon stainless round
Of sapphire sky the smirched ground.
For all things most pure and sweet
That nature owneth, blended meet

In this angel form and face,
Stealing unimagined grace
And glory from the unsullied Soul,
That dwells within and lights the whole.

THE UNKNOWN PORTRAIT.

No. II.

Brow like summer cloud for whiteness,
 Eye of heaven's serenest blue,
Cheek of day-dawn's blushful brightness,
 Lip of sunset's rosiest hue,
Glossy ringlets waving free
Round a neck of ivory ;
O'er the maiden breast descending,
With its holy whiteness blending,
Scarce its loveliness concealing,
Shading half and half revealing !
Surely ye are but a dream,
So strangely beautiful ye seem !
Or can it be ye shadow forth
A creature who hath walked this earth,

Sent down from heaven a little while
To show how angels look and smile !

And, even as one on household stairs
Who meets an angel unawares,
Might hold his breath ; in silent awe
I stood when first this Shape I saw
Look down with those blue, wondering eyes,
Whose brightness seemed to realise
My childhood's holiest reveries
Of love and innocence divine !——

I know thee not ; but well my heart
Interprets, darling, what thou art :
Light of some old ancestral hall,
Queen-gem of some proud coronal !
For, certes, such a perfect grace,
Such lustrous loveliness of face,
Such artless majesty as thine
Proclaims thee of no sordid line !—

And, while my waking dreams I weave
Of all thy sweetness, *will* believe
That somewhere ere its pulse is cold
Thy living form I may behold ;
May smooth those locks of rippling gold,
See those down-drooping eyes divine
Bend their calm summer-light on mine,
Hear those moist lips,—that fain would
 tremble
Into smiles, and but dissemble
Their quaint air of seriousness,—
With music's tenderest tones caress
My soul, or lady-laughter, sweet
As music ! watch those silken feet
Flit in the dance, as through the leaves
The white moths flit on summer eves,
Silent and swift—or, lovelier still,
On some free, windy Norland hill,
Tread the brown heath in virgin pride !
Or, haply, by some brooklet side

Glance bare amongst the liliated green,
Flushing the waves with rosy sheen !

Ah ! futile dream ! yet not in vain
Thou flatterest this weary brain ;
For gentle thoughts must come, I trow,
Where such sweet visitants as thou
Have lingered !——And, my gentle child,
I bless thy beauty undefiled,
That in an hour of sorrow stole
Like sunshine on my darkened soul ;
And pray that, wheresoe'er thou art,
Young joy may nestle near thy heart,
And sister angels guard thee still
From every touch of earthly ill,
Folding their stainless pinions round
Thy path, to keep it holy ground ;
While this, thy Shadow, unto me
Shall guardian angel ever be !

CULLODEN.

At last I stand upon thy fatal sod,
 Drummossie Moor!—and if my eyes are wet,
 'Tis not that here the star of Stuart set
 To rise no more. The righteous hand of God
 Was on the race, whom nor prosperity,
 Nor sorrow's holier discipline, could school
 To this first axiom of true royalty :
 Who knows to serve, alone deserves to rule.
 The world could not stand still, that they might play
 The fool with empire ; so they passed. My tears
 Are not for them, but for the outnumbered Brave
 Who bled beneath the hirelings' steel that day,
 And now sleep, rank on rank, in this wide grave,
 Swathed in the verdure of a hundred years.

C A W N P O R E.

WHEN dawned the promised day-spring from on high,
 A voice was heard in Ramah : the wild cry
 Of Rachel weeping for her children slain.
 Once more the earth hath drunk the precious rain
 Of Innocent blood !—once more the agony
 Of desolated hearts assailed the sky !
 Avenge their cause, O Lord ! Yet, not the vain
 And barren vengeance of a Christless race
 We imprecate : When from before the face
 Of outraged heaven and shamed humanity
 The lightning-sword of JUSTICE shall have swept
 The Un-nameable—grant that the tears now wept,
 The martyr-blood now shed into Thy hand,
 May prove the Chrism of a redeemèd land.

ROSLIN CHAPEL.

IN the husht summer noon I stood alone
 In Roslin's sylvan fane. No sound was heard,
 Save the far, fitful fluting of one bird,
 And the low river-voices murmuring on
 Amid the leaves their faint antiphonies.
 And here, I said—as fancy backward ranged
 Through all the dim, tumultuous centuries—
 For ever through the changing years unchanged,
 With silence for its guardian angel, stands
 This wondrous temple, reared by mortal hands,
 But deckt by hands immortal, as a shrine
 Sacred to beauty and eternal thought,
 Where every creed may worship. Touch it not,
 O man, with impious hands! The house is God's—
 not thine!

“THROUGH THE WATERS.”

I.

Lower and lower sinks the weary moon

Towards the vapoury bar.

Higher and higher soars the morning star

Through the flusht heaven of June.

The east grows pale—it will be morning soon !

Up through the gusty sound,

Each with his glimmering foam - wreath
crowned,

The ocean waves come ramping,

Ramping and rolling with haughty roar,

Line after line, in the wan moonshine,

Like an army of heroes proudly tramping
To death on a hostile shore.

And ever the salt winds sob and sigh,

And the sheeted spindrift whistles by,

Like the voice and the tears of agony.
And cold as the breath
Of slander or death
The balmy midnight air has grown,
As I drive fast and free,
With the send of the sea,
With the long, weary wash of the salt, singing sea—
The moon in my white sail, the foam-fire a-lee,
In the night of my sorrow—alone.

II.

Whitherso'er I fly :
'Mid the loud city's roar,
Beside the wild sea-shore,
Like mine own shadow still I feel her nigh.

Between me and God's light
In the blue noon she stands ;
I feel the hot clasp of her clinging hands
In the dead hours of night.

The stars of twilight burn

With the weird brightness of her eyes ;

To the sad cadence of her sighs

Across the moors the midnight breezes mourn ;

The innocent flowers of spring

That lift their dewy faces in the grass ;

Sun-gleams that o'er the summer woodlands pass ;

Brown autumn's fields in silence ripening ;

The low warm sighs that stir

The flowery queaches ere the night comes down ;

The sylvan odours from the woodland blown,

Cedar and beech and fir ;

The sea-vaults where, 'neath many a quaint festoon

Of immemorial moss, the Atlantic waves

Chant their wild dirges, as the storm-wind raves

Beneath the winter moon :

Whate'er of beautiful

Earth holds, or wild, or sweet—

The very dust beneath my restless feet !—

Seems of HER BEING full ;

As though the unuttered Thought

Of her that burns within my tortured soul

Had fired insensate matter, and the whole

With passionate life were fraught ;

Till common things, grown strange

And startling, ever seem—

As in a madman's dream—

Quickening with portent of gorgonian change.

III.

O, earth, that art so fair !

With all thy leafy nooks,

Valleys and mountain brooks,

Hast thou no spot to shield me from despair ?

O, sea ! majestic sea !

Hast thou no quiet cave,

Where grief might find a grave

Unhaunted by the vampire Memory ?

O, heaven, divine and calm !

Hast thou no gentle rain

To cool this feverous brain ?

To soothe this aching heart, no holy balm ?

O, spirit that dost glow

Within me ! Sacred spark

Of the Eternal Pharos ! through the dark,

Tempestuous night of error and of woe,

Hast thou no ray to guide

This shipwrecked life—with all its lofty aims,

Ennobling duties, humanising claims,

Its passion and its pride ?

There is no answer—but the gathering roar
Of hungry night-winds from their viewless caves,
And the remorseless thunder of the waves,
Bursting in darkness on an unknown shore !

IV.

As one who, tottering, on a mountain peak
At midnight stands, and, gazing far below,
Sees beckoning shapes of horror come and go,
Hears luring voices from the abysses shriek ;

So stand I, dizzy, on the utmost verge
Of reason, with bewildered brain,
And eyes blind with the fiery rain
Of anguish ; while a thousand phantoms urge

The headlong plunge into the yawning deep
Of madness. And were madness death,
And death oblivion, I would hold my breath
And take the leap !

V.

A purple splendour swathes the mountain steeps ;
 Slowly night's cloudy cerements are withdrawn ;
 And, as a spirit from the charnel leaps,
 Leaps up the east the glory of the dawn !
 Eastward the strong wind bloweth,
 Eastward the great sea floweth,
 Eastward the wan haze traileth,
 Eastward the sea-bird saileth,
 Eastward the dark earth turneth,
 Eastward my lone heart yearneth,
 And eastward, eastward strain my yearning
 eyes
 To where, beyond the veil of mist,
 Stretched like a cloud of faintest amethyst,
 Headland and valley, crag and shadowy cove,
 Athwart the track of morn the island lies :
 The island that I love !
 And there, ah ! there—
 Peace, burning heart within thy crimson deeps ;

Thy reign at last is o'er!—
Amid the halo of its golden hair
The sweet face sleeps ;
The pale, sweet face, that I shall see no more !

VI.

But enough of idle gazing
In the dead face of The Past !
IT IS DEAD. Come, sexton Chronos,
Let thy charnel-mould be cast

Over what was erst so lovely,
Now a cold and ghastly clod.
Requiescat ! Requiescat !
Fill the grave and clap the sod.

For I hear Fate's pinions rushing
Onward through the waning night,
And the trumpets of the future
Sounding from the sunward height,

And a sovereign voice that calleth
 Through the breezy morning air :
 Life is all too brief and precious
 To be wasted in despair !

Man hath other work than weeping !
 'Tis with sweat, and not with tears,
 He fulfils his being's purpose,
 Reaps the harvest of his years,

Builds from passion's burning chaos,
 With Heaven's order still at strife,
 Even from error, sin, and shame,
 The cosmos of Heroic Life.

Up, then, up ; be strong and earnest,
 Using life's diminished span
 To redeem thy youth's fair promise—
 Bravely, calmly,—even as one

Who hath known whate'er of joy

Or sadness human heart may know,

And cometh, purified for conflict,

From the baptism of woe.

BOY-LOVE.

THERE is a rose-embowered islet

In the ocean of my dreams,

Like some crimson cloud of twilight

That through ether swims ;

So bright, so still ! and dear to me,

Is this halcyon isle of MEMORY.

Yet deem not that I love it so

For groves of palm or myrtle bowers,

Or limpid streams that ever flow

In music through a land of flowers.

No ! what were scene, however fair,

If human love were wanting there !

But there the little brown-eyed maid
I dare not meet by day,
Flits like a bird from shade to shade,
And bird-like sings away,
To guide me to the secret nest
That nightly screens our linkèd rest.

So, ever when the day goes down
Into the quiet deep,
By hope's delicious breath I'm blown,
In the silent bark of sleep,
Away, away to this phantom isle,
To bask in the light of her gentle smile.

FAIRY MADRIGAL.

I.

FEATLY, fairies, foot the dance,
O'er moss and flower !
Through the gloom the fire-flies glance,
Like a golden shower ;
And in their starry light,
While the moon yet sleeps behind the hill,
Weave we our reel to-night
To the chiming of the rill ;
Or the song the skylark weaves
'Mongst the leaves,
As he hymns the dawning gleams
In his dreams.

II.

What, ho ! The wisp-fire ! Through the dark
Follow him fleet,
Over the marsh that takes no mark
Of our elfin feet.
Yo-ho ! now hang him out
On the foxglove spire for a lamp to be !
While round and round about
We quaff so merrily,
From buttercup and harebell blue,
Our nectar-dew,
Nor lack from lips divine
Sweeter wine !

III.

Twist we, twist we, twirl and twine
Along the green !
But see ! those rosy streaks that shine
The boles between !
Mount we the westering wind !

Come, follow the track of the twilight grey !

We shall leave the morning far behind—

To Avalun away !

There may our charmed sleep

Be as deep

As thine, blue waning moon,

In the noon !

FIORDESPINA.

I.

'Twas on a bright and breezy autumn morn,
 When hill and vale reeled purple-flusht with wine,
 By immemorial Tiber thou wert born,
 A creature all divine !
 Nurst on the breast of Poesy : the child
 Of ever-young Romance—warm, beautiful, and wild.

II.

No earthly sire was thine, mysterious maiden !
 Thy dark-eyed mother thridding by the moon
 Some antique wood with wonder-dreams o'erladen,
 Lapt in a golden swoon,
 Like vestal Rhea in the sacred grove,
 Blest some immortal lover with a mortal's love.

III.

And—when (the sweet moons past) the mellow year,
Beloved of Pan, her honeyed fruits brought forth—
Dying, amid the sunlight warm and clear,
Left thee alone on earth :
Alone on earth, a weird, supernal thing,
Full of still, trançèd joy and dreamy sorrowing :

IV.

Alone on earth, in virgin majesty
Throned where the torch of Eros fears to burn ;
Like a lone sunbeam o'er a darksome sea,
Where'er thy pure eyes turn,
Shedding a halo of divinest light,
Wherein thou movest veiled in rapture of delight ;

V.

An all-embracing aureole of high thought :
Shadows from out the past, and wandering gleams
Of the evolving future, dimly caught
In sleep from saintly dreams :

Far-beckoning sympathies with some bright sphere,
For which thy spirit yearns with many an unshed
tear.

VI.

A sphere where Love and Innocence are one,
Where Truth and star-eyed Reason walk assoyled
From ban ; where Thought undazzled eyes the
sun ;
Where Passion, undefiled
By earth, becomes Religion ; where to Thee
I might become what *here*, alas ! I cannot be.

VII.

She hears me not ! but evermore doth speak
With low, soft, eager voice ; her wide, black eyes
Gleam to the stars ; her poor unconscious cheek
Upon my bosom lies,
Fevered and flusht amid the dewy air
That laves along my lips the dark tide of her hair.

VIII.

What hear'st thou in the rushing of the river,
That thus with trancèd ear thou listenest ?
What seest thou in those filmy bars that quiver
Low in the shadowing west ?
The Beautiful of old yet live ! And thou
Dost hold mysterious converse with them even now !

IX.

They float around thee from the sylvan nooks,
From out the wide domes of the twilight air ;
All gentle demons with sweet, wondering looks
And forms for ever fair :
Phantasms who linger yet by many a shore,
Though man's dull eyes behold their beauty now no
more.

X.

They float around thee, to thy soul serene,
Primeval Truth, on earth forgotten long,
Chanting in charmed numbers ; and between

The waves of solemn song
Trip the rare ether to the silvery tone
Of dithyrambic timbrels, heard by thee alone !

XI.

They lure thee hence ! And shall we trace no more
The leafy caverns of the summer wood !
No more together by the midnight shore
Hear voices of the flood
Muttering to heaven the ancient mysteries
Hid in the unresting bosom of the doomful seas !

XII.

No more as now, together, in the soft,
Still, odorous darkness of the summer even,
Watch pale Silene wander forth aloft
Through the wide wastes of heaven,
Seeking and finding not—like thee ! like me !
Like all who breathe the breath of sad mortality !

XIII.

They lure thee hence ! Thou fadest from my view !

Even while I clasp thee, my belovèd one,

Thou fadest from me !—as a tear of dew,

Kissed by the wakening sun

From off the argent eyelids of the morn,

Seeks the blue-vaulted void—ah ! never to return !

XIV.

Yes, thou must seek thy native land—to die !

And I once more tread life's rough track—alone !

Nay ! to my spirit thou wilt still be nigh,

Though from this bosom flown ;

Still shine as heretofore, my pilot star,

Sphered in the heaven of thought where the immortal
are.

XV.

The wandering odours of the vernal wood,

The mournful music of the winter sea,

The city's roar, the hush of solitude,

Shall speak to me of thee !
Death cannot part us. In the realm of dreams
We yet shall meet and love, whate'er the wise world
deems !

XVI.

Then let me kiss the tremor from thy brow,
And dry the tears from those wan eyelids starting.
Nay, weep not !—why should earthly weakness throw
Its shadow on *this* parting !—
Kiss me ! Oh, closer, closer !—'tis the last.
God keep thee ! Morning breaks : our dream of life
is past.

I D Y L.

To D. O. H.

WE tore along with snort and yell,
 Through barren wastes of mounded sand ;
 Till with a sudden sweep we came
 Upon the sunlit ocean strand.

Dark-blue beneath the dark-blue sky
 The windless main stretched far away,
 And here and there the white-sailed ships,
 Entranced, with long white shadows lay.

Still as a dream ! But, as the breast
 Of some sweet sleeper heaves and falls,
 One long, bright surge along the beach
 Upheaved and fell at intervals.

Such, said I, was the hour, the scene,
When Zephyr to the Paphian shore,
With Nereid song and winded shell
The maiden Aphrodite bore ;

While all the warm Idalian air
Around her flusht with rosy flame,
And marble crag and myrtle grove
Burst into music as she came !

When, lo ! as if the whispered words
Had realised my shadowy thought,
My soul from Nature's bounteous breast
Drank of the loveliness it sought :

For there, upon the glimmering marge,
Between the sea and sea-worn rocks,
Stood, mother-naked, in the sun,
A little girl with golden locks.

Quickly, as if 'twixt shame and fear,
Half round she turned with blushful grace,
And with a piteous smile threw back
The tresses from her glowing face.

Then, with a tremulous shriek, she tossed
Her rosy, rounded arms in air,
While, like a maenad's, backward streamed
The lustrous tangle of her hair.

With shout on shout, with bound on bound,
Aloft she clapt her dimpled hands,
And, seaward, with reverted glance,
Fled, gleaming, down the gleaming sands.

Her white foot touched the silvery foam—
One wild, exultant leap she gave,
Like the winged fish of Indian seas,
And plunged into the coming wave.

I saw her glittering form emerge—

I heard her breathless laughter ring,

One moment ! Then once more away

Rushed the steam-fiend on murky wing.

Once more away ! with snort and yell

We fled the lone, enchanted spot—

But richer—purer, for that draught

Of beauty, ne'er to be forgot !—

So, let us thank kind Heaven, my friend,

Who, if to us it hath refused

The golden charm, by knave and fool

Possessed so oft—so oft abused—

Yet, wielded by the wise and good,

That works such blessings in the land—

Hath given the clear, perceptive eye,

The thoughtful brain to understand—

Despite the soul-distracting moil
And clangour of this iron age—
The runes by God's own finger writ
On Nature's ever-open page :

The unshrinking reason, that dare track
Faith's river to its fountain-springs,
And read the lofty meanings hid
In what the world calls Common things :

The heart to feel the beauty shed
O'er all, through all, from Heaven above,
And, like that Heaven, to comprehend
Creation in one clasp of love.

SIR LAUNCELOT.

“Had not Sir Launcelot been in his secret thoughts and in his mind set inwardly to the Queen, as he was in seeming outward unto God, there had no Knight passed him in the quest of the Sancgreall.”—*La Mort d'Arthur*.

PAST sleeping thorp and guarded tower,
 By star-gleams and in moonlight pale,
 By mount and mere, through shine and shower,
 Flasht the wan lightning of his mail.

But loose the jewelled bridle hung,
 And, backward, listless drooped the spear—
 God's holy name was on his tongue,
 Thine in his heart—Queen Guenivere.

Deep in a wood at dead of night
 He felt the white wings winnowing by,

He saw the flood of mystic light,

He heard the chanting clear and high.

“O, heal me, blood of Christ!” he said—

A low voice murmured in his ear,

And all the saintly vision fled—

The voice was thine—Queen Guenivere.

Bravest of all the brave art thou—

Of guileless heart—of stainless name ;

But, traitor to thy sacred vow,

Thou rid'st to ruin and to shame.

No joy on earth for evermore !

No rest for thee but on thy bier !—

Ah ! blessed Lord our sins who bore,

Save him—and sinful Guenivere !

PAN AND SYRINX.

Long, long ago, as poets sing,
When earth was in her jocund spring,
And passion scarce was crime construed,
Old Pan a river-maid pursued
 Adown green Ladon's valley.

Like some flakèd cloud that flies
Aloft through breezy April skies,
Or sun-gleam o'er the Ionian sea,
With fluttering heart and trembling knee,
 Down Ladon's leafy valley,

Fast she fled ! while on her track,
Ever nearer, like a rack

Of lowering thunder-cloud, he strains,
Or Ladon mad with mountain rains,
Adown his echoing valley.

Now athwart the gliding river
Their twin shadows flit and quiver—
Now the pine wood's odorous night
Shrouds awhile their headlong flight
Down green Ladon's valley.

Now the sunlit meadow-flowers
Round their flying feet in showers
Of gold and azure fall—and then,
In the leaves they're lost again,
Adown fair Ladon's valley.

Ah ! hadst thou been less grisly old,
She, perdy, had proved less cold !
But despite thy grisly oldness,

And despite her froward coldness,
Deep in Ladon's valley

Thou hadst won thy wish ere long—
And who will dare avow 'twas wrong?—
Maiden lips have fooled, I trow,
Stern moralists than thou,
In many a dewy valley !

Ha ! he grasps her by the fair
Tresses of her streaming hair !
In vain she calls !—nor gods on high
Nor men below will hear her cry,
In Ladon's lonely valley !

Yes, huntress of the silver bow !
Thou heard'st the virgin's shriek of woe !
And vain was all his hungry speed—
He clasped a maiden and kissed—a reed,
In Ladon's silent valley !

S O N N E T.

AND is it thus our feverous race we run
 Through visible life,—that dream within a dream,
 To death,—that WHAT ?—like bubbles on a stream,
 Bright or obscure, as Fortune's venal sun
 Flatters or flouts, with arbitrary gleam.
 Like these, we *are* not, but do only *seem* :
 Mere hollow semblants ! Catching, as a mirror,
 Our hues from circumstance :—or truth, or error—
 Or gloom, or gaiety. And though, awhile,
 We may deceive, and win her specious smile,
 With others, as ourselves, deceitful, vain ;
 What boots it ? Will *that* medicate the pain
 Of conscious insignificance ? and when
 Life's paltry bubble bursts,—*ceases to seem*—what
 then ?

IN THE FOREST.

FRAGMENT.

DEEP in the cedarn forest stands her bower,
Where emerald glooms and golden lights for ever
Weave a gay morrice-dance o'er grass and flower—
As o'er the ripples of a wavy river
The arrowy sun-stars whirl and shoot and shiver ;
Where the young dryad, Odour, panting flees,
Through glade and grove the long midsummer day,
Her music-pinioned paramour, the Breeze,
Till, faint with lovesome play,
They sink asleep, together lapt and folden,
Amid the sleeping lilies of a brook,
Or couched on mosses, purple, green, and golden,
In soome unfooted nook ;

Where sits the nightingale on hawthorn spray,
Witching the dark with lovelorn roundelay,
That echoes far the bosky vistas through,
With sweet reverberations ever new ;
Where floats the white moth, from her tremulous wings
Thrilling pale radiance, and the small gnat sings
A drowsy requiem, ere he sinks to die
Under the harebell's drooping canopy ;
Where, in his blazoned mail, the beetle glides,
Thrums the gaunt grasshopper his brazen sides,
Through the lush grass the elfin glow-worm gleams,
And aye unseen the shrewmouse flits and screams ;
While, like some bandit o'er his garnered heap,
Hidden in mossy cavern, warm and deep,
The weary wood-bee hums himself asleep,
And overhead, throughout the silent night,
The mouldering beech-root looms with weird phosphoric
light.

SONNET.

'Tis a wild night ! The mountain path is rude ;
 The pale stars reel and dance among the clouds
 That hurry o'er the sky in murky crowds,
 Like giant Nornir. From the wind-swept wood
 Owl shrieks to querulous owl. With eiry din
 Roars through the hollow dark the swollen lyn.
 The moon steals up above the tossing pines :
 Wan as a dying charnel-lamp it shines,
 Making the night more drear. But what to me
 Or storm or darkness ! Onward joyously
 I toil—as toils a lone bark tempest-driven
 For shore, or weary soul for rest in heaven :
 On through the gloom with fond eye fixed on thee,
My happy haven ! *my* blest eternity !

C I R C E.

LIKE some poor wretch in mortal fever,
 Fitfully with vague endeavour,
 Maniac shout and idiot weeping,
 Ossas on dim Pelions heaping,
 To storm—alas ! he knows not what
 Olympus of fantastic thought ;
 So, with blind rage and frantic wailing,
 Writhes in travail unavailing
 This Briarean world of ours,
 This maelstrom of contending powers,
 This seething mass of human will,
 Of love, of hate, of good, of ill,
 Of courage calm and headlong terror,
 Humble truth and haughty error,

Doubt and faith, and pride and shame,
Kisses, curses, praise, and blame,
Pale disease and rosy health,
Pinched poverty and bloated wealth,
Youth and dotage—one and all,
Round this corpse-incrusted ball
Pursuing some imagined Goon,
In a sweat of tears and blood :
Pleasure—Fortune—Freedom—Fame—
What is either but a name !
Let them battle, let them rave,
From the go-cart to the grave !
What to Us is all the stir,
Rosy-lipped philosopher !
Thy keen-edged laughter—like the sword
Of Macedon's impetuous lord—
Hath cleft in twain the stubborn cord
Heart-knotted round my high resolves,
And all youth's daring dream dissolves !
No more I yearn amid the throng

To work my will with sword or song :
To shield the helpless—beard the strong,
And, armed with right, to vanquish wrong.
Still may weak laws degrade the poor,
And *patriots* cozen them, secure
From retribution. Still remain
The poor deserving of their chain—
Oh ! Slavery ! this thy foulest stain !—
Still may their own hands fabricate
Fresh fetters to perpetuate
Their degradation. Let them toil,
Despairing helots, on the soil
Which is their birthright. Never more
May comfort guard the poor man's door,
When frost bites keen and chill winds roar—
Nor joy sit smiling by his hearth—
What right hath poverty to mirth !
Let vice and infidelity
Still rot men's souls from sea to sea,
While Mother Church with tranquil face

Sits throned aloof in pride of place,
Intoning low with courtly ease
Her stately platitudes ; nor sees,
Nor hears where, struggling in the night
Of ignorance, they cry for light,
For food, for love,—but cry in vain :
Her spotless lawn she must not stain
By contact with the godless rout
Who dare to hunger—and to doubt !
Let selfishness, that monster-birth
Of sin and fear, still rule the earth,
As heretofore, with iron rod—
Man's only universal god !
Some stronger arm must strike the blow
That lays sin's loathly hydra low ;
Must take the sting from poverty,
And, in the truth, make mankind free !
Mine be a gentler task : afar
From din of life's heart-sickening jar,
Lost in the magic maze of love

Beneath thy whispering woods to rove,
And dedicate my days to thee—
Henceforth my sole divinity !
No more ambition's " foolish fire,"
That drags the great world through the mire—
Smirching so many a robe of pride,
Shall lure me, Circe, from thy side ;
Her richest meed were lost on one
Who lives but for thy smile alone !
Still less shall vulgar lust of pelf
Rob me of thee—and of myself,
Pollute my spirit, freeze the springs
Of joy, and clip young fancy's wings,—
I'll leave *it* to earth's creeping things !
Those human scarabs who would rake
Gehenna's foulness for its sake ;
Then, having found some golden grains,
Wax straightway orgillous—like drains
In thaw—strut forth with horn erect,
And, blushless, claim the world's respect ;

As though, God help them ! they had done
Some noble thing beneath the sun,
And not—the sort of work designed
For creatures of the scarab kind !
Dearer this dimpled hand to fold
Thus close in mine, than all the gold
O'er which Pactolus ever rolled !
Sweeter to hear Thee breathe my name
Thus low, than all the blatant fame,
For which mankind have ever given
Their peace on earth, their hope of heaven !
Nor would I for her proudest wreath
Forego those locks, that in thy breath
Wave odorous as they downward flow
In sunshowers from thy shadowy brow,
And weave a halo round my head
More glorious far than fame could shed !

.

I have no life apart from thine ;
No hope beyond Thee, witch divine !

The future now hath nought to give
For which I would not scorn to live,
Beyond thy love ! Thus lost in Thee,
Even life itself hath ceased to be
Aught but a solitary sense
Of passion's crowned omnipotence !

A G N E L L I N A.

Come hither, little brown-eyed maid,
And lean upon my breast,
And lay thy soft young cheek to mine,
That my spirit may have rest.

For I am sick of woman's love,
So fickle, froward, wild,
And with strange yearning turn to thine,
Thou blameless little child !

O, were it sooth the legend tells
Of that mysterious tree,
Which whoso tasteth straight returns
To blissful infancy,

With pilgrim staff and sandal shoon
I'd search the wide world round,
Nor rest till, wheresoe'er it grew,
The magic fruit were found.

Ah ! hopeless dream ! Yet while I feel
Thy joyous bosom beat
Against my weary heart, and drink
Thy kisses calm and sweet,

The fiery worm of memory sleeps,
My soul forgets her pain,
And in the smile of heaven I walk
With thee—a child again.

E R E M E.

ROAMING about the woods at eventide,
 Singing as sang the birds i' the leafy bowers.
 Deep in a grove a flowerlike babe I 'spied
 Sleeping serenely on a couch of flowers.

Breathless, by turns each dewy-folded lid
 I kissed—his mouth, his cheeks, his forehead fair;
 While round him, all a-blush, my arms I slid,
 And shook a shadow o'er him with my hair.

And then, as one, who in a lonely place
 Hath found a priceless gem he dreads to lose,
 Doth turn on every side his fearful face,
 And starting fleëth, although none pursues :

So in my robe I wrapped my new-found treasure,
With many a stealthy glance and quick caress ;
And bore him, trembling with the sweet, strange pleasure,
Into my chamber's warm and hush'd recess.

What joy it was, bending above him there,
To watch his honeyed breathing ebb and flow,
To touch the rounding of his shoulders fair,
To smooth his pinions' rosy-tinctured snow !

And when he turned him in his sleep and smiled,
What blissful madness flooded all my brain !
With fancies vague and beautiful and wild
Flattering my heart and flushing every vein :

Till, with my hot cheek pillowed on his breast,
Ambrosial darkness of the summer night
Lapped my faint spirit in enchanted rest,
Deeper than slumber, sweeter than delight.

Ai ! ai ! that in that transport I had died !

Or died ere yet that transport I had known !
For when the morning dawned my arms were void,
My love-warmed nest a-cold, my sweet bird flown !

And not a sign save only this remained,
To tell where in my bosom he had slept !—
Whereat the poor soul from her azure-veined
And milky side the peplos drew, and wept :

For lo ! where swells the bosom's balmy round,
Full-orbed above the clasping gold—Ah me !
A barbèd shaft had ript a teenful wound,
A bitter wound, that bled full cruelly.

And so, she said, I sit and nurse my pain,
Here, a lone, wounded dove, in forest shade,
Waiting, if haply he will come again :
For love alone can heal the wound that love hath
made.

MOONLIGHT:

A FRAGMENT.

DAY sinks at last behind the purple hills,
And silence wraps the land. Here, gentle friends,
Let's nestle in the fresh-piled aftermath,
And watch the quiet coming of the moon.
Already from the zenith's dim abyss
Her starry harbingers peer forth—then vail
Their cressets. Hesperus alone, wide-eyed,
Through fairy isles of amethyst and gold,
Swims up the ebbing radiance of the west
With blazing torch to meet her. And lo! she comes,
Enchantress-queen of shadows, of pale dreams,
Of passionate yearnings—madness and despair ;

Yet, see ! how tranquilly she smiles, adown
The roseate summer dark ; her silvery veil
Uplifting,—like the heaven-descended one
Who stood revealed in virgin majesty
To care-worn Dante by the mystic bourn,
What time the quires angelic chanted, “ Come,
My Bride, from Lebanon,” and angelic hands
Rained lilies gathered at the feet of God !

How beautiful, how beautiful thou art !
O pilgrim orb !—with fond imploring face
Turned ever as thou journeyest, Clytie-like,
Towards the golden shrine thou ne’er canst win :
Bright with the light of everlasting love,
Wan with the shadow of eternal woe !

DIRTY WEATHER.

MOANETH ever the weary wind,

Pelteth ever the rain ;

The grey sky lowereth,

The sear wood roareth,

The red river poureth

Down to the main.

O'er cornfield and fallow,

O'er headland and shallow,

The white mist is trailing,

The sea-birds are sailing,

And shrieking and wailing

In pain.

With a bruise on her back,
And slime in her track,
Slowly and wearily over the road
The weak worm is crawling ;
And, heavily sprawling
Through the wind-battered reeds,
Through the rain-rotten weeds,
Through the leprous and rich-
Bubbling scum of the ditch,
Croaketh and choketh the crapulous toad.

With shock upon shock,
And a deep under-thunder,
On the black, dripping rock,
The black billows sunder,
And churn their blind bulk into yeast,—
As a beast,
Blind with terror and rage,
On the bars of his cage
Dashes out his brute life with a wild howl of wonder.

With sigh upon sigh
From a heart sick with sadness ;
With tear-jaundiced eye,
And a brain wrung to madness
With care, and the strife
Between higher and lower
Within me ; while life,
Flowing slower and slower,
Seems to stagnate and rot,—
Here I sit—a mere blot
On the page of creation—
No rare case, God wot !—
With weak ululation
Bewailing my lot ;
While nation to nation,

Of freedom and glory and knowledge and love
Is chanting in thunder-loud chorus, above
The wild clang of battle, where, trampled in blood,
Roll crowns and tiaras ;—and on at the flood
Sweeps the clear wave of Progress. On, on may it sweep

Till the Christ-ransomed millions of earth from the
sleep

Of ignorance, vice, and oppression shall leap—

From lazar and dungeon, full-armed in the might

Of their God-moulded manhood—and hurl into night

The fetters that bound them,

The cerements that wound them,

Soul, body, and brain.

And abroad—to a strain

Of such music as rang

When the universe sprang

Into being—the bright flag of Freedom shall wave

O'er a new world that knows neither bigot nor slave !

Hillo ! there's a collier got crippled !—I see :

'Tis her fore-tackle. Up she has swung, and a-lee

Goes heavily drifting right into the bay,

Her dirty rags flapping in fog-mist and spray ;

Her bandy-legged, cockle-eyed ' skip,' I should say,

'S in a bit of a mess ; for they don't seem to know

There's a sandbank out there—and the tide's getting
low.

Well, no doubt it's a bore—but, of course, I must go
And see if I can't lend the fellows a hand,
Should they come—which is likely—as flotsam to land.

A L O N E.

'Twas eve ; the level sunlight fell
Athwart the distant ocean-swell,
And like a wreath of glory lay
Along the ripples of the bay,
That, curling inwards to the greener strand,
Died in a starry gush along the golden sand.

No thing of earthly mould was nigh,
Save one lone skylark, trancedly
Hymning up the cloudless sky,
On the wings of his own wild melody.
No other sound,—save when the breeze
Sighed in the solemn chestnut trees,

Or stirred the spear-grass by my side,—
Answered the whispers of the tide ;
And over all, like guardian spirit, shone
Eve's "bright particular star," all lovely and alone !

I gazed upon the glimmering bay,
I gazed into the tranquil sky,
I heard the skylark's roundelay,
I saw the waves glide glittering by,
I felt the low winds round me sigh,
And to my weary spirit said :
Why linger still beside the dead ?
Look forth from out thy living grave,
Nor longer—freeborn—be the slave
Of misery. No longer pine
For happiness—already thine,
If thou but choose to look abroad
Upon the workmanship of God !
I seek the Beautiful, it sighed—
It is around thee, I replied :

Look forth into this glorious eve,
But once look forth, and thou wilt own
No sentient thing hath room to grieve,
Whate'er betide. With inward moan
It answered—Am I not ALONE?

ARIADNE :

FOUR SKETCHES FROM THE ANTIQUE.

I.

HE left her weeping on the Naxian shore,
And homeward with triumphant garlands bore.
Through blinding tears she watched his lessening sail,
And the sun burning on his brazen mail.
Blent with the thunders of the hoary deep,
Blent with the salt wind's wail, as if in sleep,
She heard his voice grow fainter, as he trod
The sounding deck victorious, like a god !
She heard the rowers singing as they rowed ;
She saw the fluttering sheen of Ægle's veil ;
She heard her laughter on the freshening gale,

And shrieked. Well, Ariadne! may'st thou
mourn :

The perjured ingrate never will return.

Another bosom,—ah ! less fair than thine !—

Shall pillow his proud head beyond the brine ;

Another brow the Athenian crown shall share,

And other arms his Attic children bear !—

But still she gazed, and still, with claspèd hands

Outstretched to Delos, knelt upon the sands,

Till daylight died among the Cyclades,

And darkness gathered o'er the desolate seas.

II.

Smiles over all an azure-vaulted clime,—

The wandering airs breathe odour of the rose,

Thick-fallen fir-cones, moss, and dewy thyme,

Blent with the cool wind from the sea that blows.

Scattering the stars, the Olympian charioteer

His beamy front upreareth ; silently

His cloud-borne coursers urge their steep career
Up the rath purple of the eastern sky.

Through the long grass—o'er the awakening flowers—
Up the grey boles of cedar, beech, and pine,
His golden splendours slant in arrowy showers,
Or, snake-like, leap and twine.

And hark ! from far the greenwood alleys ring
With sistrum, cymbal, flute, and twangling string,
With pipe and timbrel and Iacchie shout !
Io ! evoè ! ho ! In motley rout
Through the deep umbrage, forth into the gleam
Of morn, the frolic feres of Evan stream !
Here the lithe Indian, nursling of the sun,
Wreathing bright snakes about his shoulders dun,
Comes leaping. There, with smilax garlanded,
The Mænad tosses her delirious head ;
Now the brown Satyr thumps the rooty ground
With horny heel to Syrinx' liquid sound ;

Now the young Oread's milky beauties shine
'Neath emerald shadows of the liberal vine ;
Now, by two sinewy Sylvans borne on high,
Flushed with the god the Lesbian sage comes by,
Chanting old ditties of Titanic wars,
Thrumming his can, and winking at the stars
That linger yet aloft—his joyous brow,
Fresh twined with lustrous ivy, all a-glow !
While high o'erhead blushes the grape divine,
 Heavy with unborn wine !

III.

Still as a stone, and pallid as a flower
Reft by sharp Eurus from Aurora's bower,
Under a marble cliff that guards the bay,
Her dark locks heavy with the midnight spray,
Alone the love-lorn Ariadne lay.
She sleeps !—but still her burning cheeks are wet,
For in her dreams she mourns her Theseus yet ;

Nor hears the blue-eyed daughters of the main
Weave their wild songs to soothe her deathly pain.

IV.

Who in his purple chariot, panther-drawn,
Bursts through the revel, glorious as the dawn—
His dancing hair with tender vine-leaves crowned,
His rosy feet with golden sandals bound ?
Athwart his ivory shoulders, backwards blown
By his own speed, a pard's light spoils are thrown ;
In his soft hand the wreathèd thyrsus gleams,
And from his dark, bold eye the godhood beams !
Io ! evoè ! ho !—'Tis he ! 'tis he !
Bacchus, the white-armed son of Semele !

Wake, Ariadne ! On the billowy strand
He bends above thee, and with gentlest hand
Smooths thy dank hair and breathes o'er cheek
and brow,

As breathes the spring o'er winter's waste of snow ;
Breathes until once again the roses bud and blow !

Wake, Ariadne ! Night hath past away
With all thy sorrow. See ! the joyous Day
Comes dancing o'er the eastern foam. Arise,
And shame him with the glory of thine eyes ;
They were not made for tears, nor this white breast
for sighs !

Wake, Ariadne ! by thy slumbering side
Lyæus kneels, and woos thee for his bride ;
With him to roam from sunny shore to shore,
A proud and peerless queen the wide world o'er ;
Wake, Ariadne, wake !—be loved ! and weep no more !

M O N O D Y.

THE drifted rain is pelting,
 The sodden snow-wreaths melting ;
 Leafless boughs are creaking
 To the night-wind's doleful shrieking ;
 The river runs below,
 With stilly-gurgling flow,
 Like the stifled breath of woe :
 Well-a-day !

Wealth—honour—what are they ?
 Delusive lights that play
 Around the dead heart's grave !
 Better, methinks, to have
 Children to climb our knees,

Love's cares and charities,
Than hollow mocks like these :
Well-a-day !

Affection—quiet—health,
The wise man's truest wealth,
And hast thou sold them all
To buy—a Funeral !
To gild a lonely bier
That stranger hands must bear,
Unhallowed by love's tear,
To the clay !

W I N T E R.

DEAD asleep the old earth lies,
Happed about with mounded snow ;
The wan moon low to westward dies ;
The bitter night-winds shrilly blow.
With muffled beat of horses' feet,
That echo songs of long ago,
Through desert wold, through village street,
From dark to dark we onward go.

So toils my life from dark to dark,
Toils onward, wearily and slow ;
No star above its course to mark,
Nor any haven of rest below.

As one may weep in frenzied sleep

O'er his own form in death laid low.

My heart doth tearful vigil keep

By her own grave in trancèd woe.

D I R G E.

IN mine ear a death-bell ringeth,

And a sad voice ever singeth :

Time is speeding on his way ;

Night treads on the skirts of day ;

All things hasten to decay ;

Old years revive not ; glory cannot shed

Sunshine around the heart when golden youth is fled.

The Past is dead. The Present dies

In birth. The faithless Future flies

Us ever : as in dreams we see

Some bright-robed, beauteous phantom flee,

Yet court pursuit—till suddenly

In some lone spot she turns, and we unfold

A crumbling corpse obscene, or night-hag grisly old.

W A R - S O N G .

1854.

I.

Ha ! once again
 O'er land and main
 Our battle-flag is flying !
 Ha ! once again
 Our freeborn men
 In Freedom's cause are dying !
 The grand old Lion's up once more,
 True to his kingly nature ;
 Come not between him and his prey,
 Slave, coward, fool, or traitor !
 Hurrah ! Hurrah ! Hurrah !
 The Old Land's true as ever !
 No despot's foot shall trample Us,
 Or those who trust us—NEVER !

II.

Have recreants said
Our hearts are dead
To justice and to glory ?
Cried "Stand aloof !"
Though Russia's hoof
In Europe's blood wax gory ?
Theirs be their country's hate and scorn
Through all the coming ages !
Well have they plied their trade of shame—
'Tis right they have their wages !
But, Hurrah ! Hurrah ! Hurrah !
Our hearts are true as ever !
No despot's foot shall tread on Us,
Or those who trust us—NEVER !

III.

But tears must fall,
In hut and hall,
For loved ones unreturning,—

High hearts and brave,
Who bled to save
The land from deeper mourning !
They bled !—we weep !—But in our task
Sublime, we dare not falter :
To guard from shame the sacred flame
On Freedom's glorious altar !
No—No !—Hurrah ! Hurrah !
The Old Land's true as ever !
God's arm of might will shield the right !
Then strike ! This hour—or NEVER !

IV.

Yes, though we weep
For those who sleep
By Alma's doleful water,
And those who died
In that wild ride
Of unavailing slaughter,
Still we exult ; for in our veins

The same free blood is bounding !
And east or north we'll pour it forth,
Where'er the charge is sounding !
Then, Hurrah ! Hurrah ! Hurrah !
The Old Land's true as ever !
No despot's foot shall trample Us,
Or those who trust us—NEVER !

THE TOMB IN THE CHANCEL.

TO W. H. P.

I.

UP from the willowy Wharfe the white haze crept,
 The yellow leaves were falling one by one,
 When through the Priory nave we softly step
 To where—his clangorous life-moil long since done—
 Sir Everard Raby in his hauberk slept,
 In the still chancel corner, all alone.
 Ah ! time had used him roughly ! Helm and shield
 All banged and battered, as in mortal field ;
 The knightly baldric brast, the brave sword gone
 That won his spurs at dusty Ascalon !
 But broken harness or dishonoured crest,
 Boots not to him so meekly slumbering there,

With stony feet crossed in eternal rest,
And stony fingers locked in everlasting prayer.

II.

The autumn sunlight touched his carven mail
With ghostly radiance—cyclas, belt, and lace ;
Scattered wan splendours all about the place,
And with fantastic necromancy played
Amongst the dust our quiet moving made ;
While o'er his suppliant hands and heavenward face
It hung a mournful glory, soft and pale,
As if, through mist of half-remembered tears,
It shone from far, the light of buried years !—
We leaned in silence on the oaken rail,
And, 'mid the hush, this thought swelled like a psalm
In my heart's sanctuary : O that we, too, might bear
Our cross through life's stern conflict, as to wear
In death, like him, the crown of everlasting calm.

S U M M E R W I N D.

SOUL of blue summer ! cool-winged Psyche ! thou
 Who, stealing through the roses, on my brow
 Printest an odorous kiss, and then art gone !
 Would that unbodied I might fly with thee
 Where'er thou fliest. Then what ecstasy
 Were mine, in forests wandering, green and lone ;
 By woodland tarn ; by willowy, winding stream.
 Where lotus-buds lie, tranced in shadowy dream,
 On their smooth fronds, the long voluptuous day ;
 Or haply, where at eve the hoary sea
 Swims with broad bosom up some quiet bay,
 Under the haunted crags of Sicily,
 What time the white-limbed Nereids, hand in hand,
 Dance to the Cyclops' piping o'er the dimpled
 sand.

A U T U M N W I N D.

Blow thy wild clarion o'er the darkening wold,

 Weird Autumn Wind, for thou art conqueror !

And, like a conqueror, robed in purple and gold,

 Dost ride triumphing. At thy tyrannous bore

Pomona quakes, and to appease thy wrath

Scatters her garnered glories in thy path.

Queen Ceres bows with earthward trailing hair

 Before thee. At the rattling of thy wheels

Strong Faunns moans, and bends beneath them, bare

 Of all his verdurous honours. Bromius reels,

To do thee boisterous homage, from his car,

Red from the laughing vintage. While from far

Poseidon shouts to swell the brave uproar,

And strews with votive wrecks the loud-resounding
 shore.

THE SONG OF SILENUS.

FIRST SKETCH FOR A PICTURE.

(VIRG. *Buc.* Ecl. vi.)

I.

SING, O Pierides ! how, on the ground,
 These frolic children of Arcadian Pan
 Deep in a cave the quaint Silenus found,
 Heavy with sleep, beside his well-worn can.
 The wreaths wherewith last night the Nymphs had
 crowned
 The fervid brows of the divine old man
 Lay strewn about ; with these they bound eftsoon,
 And bore him sleeping forth into the azure noon.

II.

Upon a hillock, mossy-soft and green,
They set him down to catch th' Ægean breeze,
When forth with laughter from her sedgy screen
Leapt Ægle, fairest of the Naiades,
And, as the Lesbian ope'd his wildered een,
Plucked, tiptoe-poised, a branch of mulberries,
And, kneeling, daubed his brow and temples grey.
While prone in leafy gyves he unresisting lay.

III.

Pleased with the deed—more with the doer pleased—
Lowly he laughed. Then to the Sylvaus cried,
“What means this bondage? Wherefore am I seized
Thus impiously? Enough that ye have eyed
A god asleep!”—“The song—and thou’rt released,”
They answered, “promised oft and long denied!”
“Unbind me, then!” ’Twas done; and from his ean,
Grape-filled anew by Ægle, quaffing, he began.

IV.

“The song for *you*,” he said ; “for *her* I’ll find
Another recompense !”—Then forth he threw
His voice euphonious to the listening wind,
That bore it far the echoing forest through,
Till the broad oaks their stubborn heads inclined,
And Satyrs, Oreads, Fauns—a motley crew—
From rock and thicket, glade and grove, advance,
Weaving around the spot their wildly-measured dance.

V.

Not more rejoices the Castalian rock
In Phœbus ; not old Rhodope the frow
In him whose love-lorn numbers did unlock
The gates of Dis, and from the Stygian shore
Won back Eurydice—(ah, bitter mock !
Twice lost—and lost at last for evermore,
Through too much love)—than in his honeyed voice
The listening woods and all the woodland feres rejoice !

VI.

He sang the dawn of Nature—mystic theme !—

How, from the chaos of primeval night,

Robed in bright billows—beauteous as a dream—

The virgin earth leapt laughing into light,

And bared her genial bosom, all a-gleam

With flowers, as Helios in his joy and might,

From the vast caverns of the eternal void,

Sprang forth on burning plumes and clasped her as
his bride.

VII.

He sang of gods and heroes : how the sire

Of Zeus had kinged it in the world's fair prime ;

Of haught Prometheus, by the Thunderer's ire

Stretched lone on Caucasus ; the impious crime

Of Atalante, and the sufferings dire

Of the young Heliads ; then the mournful rhyme

Of Tircus chants and tongueless Philomel,

And gentle Scylla curst by Circe's cruel spell.

VIII.

The loves of Zeus and Semele he sang :

How Dionysus of the wondrous birth,
With Lydian flutings and the silvery clang
Of cymbals, rode a-conquering through the earth :
How, where he trode, the clustered vine up-sprang,
And haggard care danced hand in hand with mirth :
How peerless Ariadne won his love,
And swart Agave raged in the Cadmean grove.

IX.

Up from the Ægean swept the salt sea-breeze,
And shook the white locks round his glowing brow ;
Then sang he how the blue-eyed boys of Greece
Launched the swift ship, and drove with ventur-
ous prow
To realms of wonder, far o'er unknown seas,
And back, triumphing, from its sacred bough,
By many a haunted isle and alien shore,
The golden trophy home to dear-loved Helas bore.

X.

Of fate, of love, of heaven-sent poesy

He sang, till Phœbus from his sloping car

Leaned back to hear; and through the boughs on high

The large-eyed Vesper gazed, all loth to bar

The stream of song. But now the plaintive cry

Of flocks, from darkening wolds, proclaimed afar

The folding hour. He ceased, and down a glade,

Amid the deepening shadows, vanished like a shade.

KING GOLDIMAR.

I.

BETWEEN the setting of the sun

And rising of the evening star,

Deep in the greenwood glade alone

She met King Goldimar.

A milk-white steed he lightly strode,

With jewelled falchion at his knee,

With golden casque and golden spur,

And graith of samite, fair to see :

And thus he rode to win her love,

From Avalun, the fays' countree.

II.

He louted low from saddle bow,

He breathed into the maiden's ear ;

And in the silence of the wood

Her heart stood still to hear !

He swung her deftly up on steed ;

He gave her charmed kisses three :

Says, " Golden crown for locks of gold,

Sweet Ladye, an thou wend with me ;"—

And forth into the night they rode

To Avalun, the fays' countree.

NARCISSUS:

A FRAGMENT.

HE strode apart in youthful pride,
 His clustered locks on either side
 Danced down upon his shoulders wide—

The beautiful Narcissus.

His belted bosom full and fair
 Gleamed out beneath his gleaming hair,
 His lordly length of limb was bare—

The hunter-boy Narcissus.

Athwart his broad back, bow and quiver
 In the sunlight glance and shiver,

As, adown the forest river,
 Passed the young Narcissus :
By brattling swift and slumbering pool,
Shadowed by alders green and cool,
A form divinely beautiful—
 The hunter-boy Narcissus.

For him the nut-brown Dryad grieves,
Deep hidden in her bower of leaves,
For him on musky summer eves—
 The beautiful Narcissus—
The Naiads quit their glaucous flocks
To sing about the glimmering rocks,
Or trip the sand with floating locks
 For haughty-eyed Narcissus.

For him pale Echo weeps apart—
Her cold hand on her burning heart—
She cannot tell her cureless smart,
 O hunter-boy Narcissus !

But when she hears his bugle-horn
Far-winding in the dewy morn,
She shrieks aloud—he laughs in scorn !
The beautiful Narcissus.

T H R E N O D Y.

THE spider in the jasmine leaves,
 Her fairy web of silver weaves ;
 All round the breezy cottage eaves

I hear the busy swallows :

The bee hums round his mossy door,
 The stream flows on with joyous roar,
 The starry ripples race ashore

Across the gleaming shallows.

Sheep are bleating, kine are lowing,
 Children shouting, barn-fowl crowing,
 Winds athwart the mountains blowing

Waves of shine and shadow :

To their lightsome labour bound
 The merry reapers, autumn-browned ;

And the dripping wheel goes round,
By the mill-dams in the meadow.

Like living chords of one great lyre,
Swept by a seraph's plumes of fire,
Like voices of one mighty choir

Blent in one psalm of gladness,
All things rejoice ; my heart, alone
Discordant, yields no joyous tone,
But one dull, inarticulate moan,
One weary wail of sadness.

Even as a blasted tree may stand,
All leafless in a summer-land,
In vain by genial breezes fanned,
By shower and sunshine haunted ;
So, sunned by all the warm delight
Of this young day—so purely bright—
I stand in darkness, by the might
Of Memory enchanted.

I see the infinite loveliness
Of God's fair universe—can bless
His creatures in their blessedness,
 Despite my own heart's aching :
But never more my soul may know
The thrill of sympathy, the glow
Of love that stirred it long ago,
 In youth's divine upwaking.

“MY LADY.”

I.

'Twas a stately English maiden,
Proud of step and calm of mien,
With a red mouth like a rosebud,
And the bosom of a queen,

II.

That far down the summer woodland,
Culling flowers, had lost her way
When we met among the brackens
At the closing of the day.

III.

Never lovelier vision wandered,
In the young world's age of gold,

Through green Tempe's bowers elysian,
Or Hesperian gardens old.

IV.

Ne'er to lonely knight of later
Ages, bound on perilous quest
Through enchanted forest, sweeter
Witch or woman stood confest.

V.

Ne'er through royal Shakespeare's pages,
Or strong Chaucer's pulsing line,
Or pure Spenser's crystal stanzas,
Floated phantom so divine !

VI.

But, diviner than all phantoms
Of the teeming poet-brain ;
Youth, like a sweet breeze, about her ;
Life a-glow in every vein !—

VII.

Life, that through her very garments
Seemed to palpitate and burn,
Like a mystic flame that flushes
Through an alabaster urn :

VIII.

Till the very dust she trode on
With her silent silken feet,
And the air her quickened breathing
Made so strangely, wildly sweet,

IX.

Took a glory from her presence,
As a wreath of vapour dun
Turns to amethyst and beryl
In the presence of the sun !

X.

O ! those dark locks, ever darkening
With the darkening of the even !

O ! those bright eyes, ever brightening
As the stars grew bright in heaven !

XI.

O ! those whispers, like the night-wind—
Through my brain they vibrate yet !
Syllables of magic import,
To the heart's deep music set !

XII.

O ! that purple July gloaming !
O ! that husht and shadowy nook,
Where, alone with that sweet sibyl,
First I conned love's mystic book !—

XIII.

Where young passion's nectared vintage
First allayed my soul's fierce drouth—
Crushed from out the ruby wine-press
Of that warm and loving mouth !

.

XIV.

Lady, when the summer twilight
Swoons to earth in violet gloom,
When the warm winds panting round thee
Wave their censers of perfume ;

XV.

When the blackbird in the beeches
Calls his mate with doubling note,
And the young moon's shadow trembles
Where the water-lilies float ;

XVI.

When the far-off kine are lowing,
And the village forge is mute,
And the long, dim valley echoes
To the lovelorn herdsman's flute ;

XVII.

When the milkmaid's laugh replieth,
From the quiles of new-mown hay,

And broad Hesper through the deepening
Umbrage darts a fierier ray ;

XVIII.

When the summer's dreamy languor
Creeps through every nerve and vein,
Till its very sweetness thrills thee
With a sense of mortal pain ;

XIX.

As that haughty bosom, aching,
Owns the witchery of the hour,
And thy heart throbs void and weary
In thy lone palatial bower,

XX.

And the golden robe of honour
Seems to swathe thee like a pall,
And like lead upon thy forehead
Weighs the golden coronal :

XXI.

Then, will yearning memory conjure

Back that night of joy and tears,

When we gathered love's wild roses

In the spring-time of our years ?

D E A D.

THE seasons weave their ancient dance,
The restless ocean ebbs and flows,
The world rolls on through day and dark,
Regardless of our joys or woes !

Still up the breezy western slopes
The reaper girls, like apples brown,
Bend singing to their gleeful toil,
And sweep the golden harvest down :

Still, where the slanting sunlight gilds
The boles of cedar and of pine,
Chants the lone blackbird from the brake
With melancholy voice divine :

Still all about the mossy tracks

 Hums at his darg the wood-ward bee ;

Still fitfully the corn-crake's note

 Comes to me from the upland lea :

Still round the forest bower SHE loved,

 The woodbine trails its rich festoons ;

The slumbrous poppies burst and fall

 Beneath the silent autumn moons.

Still round her lattice, perched aloof,

 In sunny shade of thatchèd eaves,

The jasmine clings, with yearning pale,

 And withers in its shroud of leaves :

Still round the old familiar porch

 Her cherished roses blush and peer,

And fill the sunny air with balm,

 And strew their petals year by year.

Nor here within, one touch of change !

The footstool—the embroidered chair—
The books—the arras on the wall—
The harp—the music—all are there.

No touch of change ! I close my eyes—

It cannot be SHE comes no more !
I hear the rustling of her dress ;
I hear her footstep on the floor ;

I feel her breath upon my brow ;

I feel her kiss upon my cheek :—
Down, phantoms of the buried past !
Down, or my heavy heart must break.

AN EXHORTATION.

KEEP thy spirit calm and pure,
 How fierce soe'er the storm may rise;
 Stand thou in the truth secure
 'Mid surge of hate and spume of lies.

The darker night, the brighter day!—
 Though maniac curse and idiot sneer,
 The clouds will roll themselves away,
 And leave thy heaven serene and clear.

But, dark or clear, have thou no fear!
 Hold on thy course with trustful eye!
 Steer for the light in hell's despite,
 Nor doubt that HE thou serv'st is nigh!

S O N G .

I.

FAIR star that shinest
 On the front of even,
 With a light divinest
 Of the stars of heaven,
 Hesper! to thee this night of nights my orisons be
 given !
 To thee who bringest all things good,
 Who bring'st the rosy hour
 Warm-blushing up the western flood,
 That leads me to her bower.
 Over the billows my bonny boat merrily go !
 The white foam sings under our lee, in our white sail
 the wind murmurs low,

As we drive down the soft summer dark, like a sea-
bird on pinions of snow.

II.

Sea and sky were gleaming
In the cloudless noon ;
Fold on fold the hills lay dreaming
In an azure swoon ;
Wold and woodland throbbed with song, and breathed
the balm of June !
But my soul was weary of the splendour,
Weary of bird and flower,
And sighed for night, the dark and still and
tender,
To lead me to her bower.
Over the billows my bonny boat gallop and go !
She is waiting us under the rock in the shell-paven
cove that we know,
Where the ivy-trail stirs not a tendril, how rudely
soever it blow.

III.

From the pine-crowned mountain

Forth into the night,

Like a welling fountain

Wells the glad moonlight,

Flushing all the starry gulfs with new and strange
delight !

So the long gloom of lonely years

Crowned love's majestic power

Makes glorious, as the warm wind bears

Me onward to her bower !

Hush ! 'Tis her soft-falling foot on the shadowy shore,

Like the lisp of a wavelet ! She comes, in the glow of
her beauty, once more !—

Rest thee, my bonny boat, rest thee till morning : our
voyage is o'er !

HYMN TO APHRODITE.

I.

GODDESS of the golden hair,
Blue-eyed Aphrodite ! Fair
Daughter of the Idalian foam !
Whether beneath the skyie dome
Of old Olympus, or the shade
Of Ida's many-whispering glade,
Where upon thy milky breast
Young Anchises—— Nay ! the rest,
An thou blushest, shall remain
Secret ;—or beside the main,
Which around thy Paphian shore
Pæans thee with joyous roar,

Thou dost wander, O ! supremely fair !

Accept those votive wreaths, and hearken to my prayer !

II.

I have crowned each altar-horn

With young roses ; I have borne,

From the marge of Hippocrene,

Myrtle branches dewy-green ;

I have heaped thy baskets o'er

With Pomona's honeyed store ;

I have brought thee pigeons, white

As those sister-spheres of light,

'Neath thy dimpled hand concealed

In vain—by their own pride revealed ;

By them, and by thy limbs of snow,

By thy lip and cheek and brow,

By thy upwreathed locks that scent the wind,

O ! hear my prayer, and aid ; for Myrrha is
unkind !

III.

I have sung my love in strains
That might have thawed the rocky veins
Of Scylla—poor lost Scylla ! She
Less cruel to Glaucus, than to me
Dark-eyed Myrrha ! Every art
Have I tried to win her heart :
Now the distaff I have plied,
Silken-seated by her side ;
Now bestrode the panting steed ;
Guided now the lightning speed
Of the chariot ; round her brow
Wreathed my hard-won olive bough ;
Wept and prayed ;—but all, alas ! in vain ;
Laughing, she flies me still. I die of her
disdain !

IV.

Night and morn she proudly sings,
Smiling through the golden strings

Of her dædal-carven lyre,
Till my soul is lapt in fire :
“ What is Venus, sparrow-borne ?
Myrrha laughs her power to scorn !
What is Eros ? What is he,
His wild-eyed brother deity ?
What their boasted torch and bow ?
And what, fond Theon, what art thou ?
What were life, and freedom gone ?
Myrrha still shall be her own ! ”
By the last kiss thy lost Adonis gave,
Hear, Cytheræa, hear ! avenge thy suppliant slave !

v.

Love is wingèd. Mine hath flown,
Leaving hate his vacant throne !
Let the haughty beauty know
Unrequited passion's woe !
Let no gentle slumber bring
Respite to her sorrowing !

Fill her frozen veins with flame,
Drown in love her maiden shame !
Bring, insulted deity !
Bring her suppliant to thy knee.
I shall laugh to see her come,
Oh, how altered ! trembling, dumb.
How I shall spurn her ! Sweet revenge !—Nay, nay !
But clasp her to my heart, and kiss her soul away !

N O N S E N S E.

SHED not for me, love, the blood of the vine,
 No wreaths of her emerant ringlets twine ;
 Pull not the roses : let us believe
 A beautiful spirit unseen doth live
 In the odorous depths of every flower,
 That loveth, as we love, the sun and the shower !
 That loveth, as we love, the summer breeze,
 The song of birds and the hum of bees !
 Whose subtile veins may throb and glow
 With a fervour which only spirits know
 For spirits ;—or I, who have long been free
 Of the spirit-world, may feel for thee,
 Who hast only clay enough about
 Thy soul, to keep me still in doubt

If thou, indeed, be child of earth,
Or creature of ærial birth :
Descended, haply, even from him
Who in the midnight, starry-dim,
Like a rich moonbeam softly crept
To where, in magic trance, she slept,
The Dark-Ladye who Merlin bore
In lone Dimatian tower of yore !—
Then pull not the flowers ! let them bud and blow,
Nod and beck and gaze their fill
On their shadows mirrored in the still,
Clear water of the fountain pool
That, bright and cool,
Smiles below,
With vague leaves paven and glimmering bells,
And clustered round with asphodels.
But give me kisses !—a sweeter wine
Fills those red, grape-like lips of thine,
Than ever “ sparkled in Sansovine.”
Yet, while one drinks,
'Tis meet, methinks—

As the Tean singeth—a wreath to wear ;
Then a garland wreath me, my dark-eyed queen !
But not of the vine leaves, crimson or green !

Nor of flowers how fair

Or sweet soc'er,—

But the scented locks of thy night-black hair
Around my temples twine !

Nor touch ye the cithern string !

Wake not the wild, sad spirits that dwell
In the echoing vault of the ivory shell !

Let them sleep :

They wake but to weep

And wander lorn on weary wing !

Wailing ever with piteous breath,

Like troubled souls for the calm of death.

From silence they come, to silence go ;

And all they yearn for, none may know.

But this we rede from their voice of woe :

They pray for peace. Then let them sleep

On their folded plumes. O, blest as deep,

In the echoing vault of the ivory shell,
Must the slumber be that they love so well !
But press to mine thy dusky cheek,
And breathe "I love thee" in my ear :
The only words thou car'st to speak,
The only words I seek to hear,
The only music that should break
The charmèd silence here !

UNDER THE WESTERN STAR.

UNDER the western star,
 Under the low gleams of the crescent moon
 I see his white sail gliding from afar,
 In the warm wind of June.

Blow, wind of summer, blow !
 Nor linger in the gardens of the west :
 Blow, blow ; thou bringest all too slow
 The loved one to my breast.

Too slow, my heart, too slow
 For thy fond pulses, that tumultuous beat
 As they would burst their bounds, and seaward
 flow
 To clasp him ere we meet.—

Fades the sweet evening light
In purple splendours of the summer dark ;
But starlike in the glow of my delight
Glimmers his homeward bark.

He comes ! I hear his keel
Gride on the silver shingle of the shore ;
Peace, foolish heart ! nor all thy joy reveal
At meeting him once more.

S O N G.

WITH the sunshine and the swallows and the flowers,
She is coming, my beloved, o'er the sea !
And I sit alone and count the weary hours,
Till she cometh in her beauty back to me ;
And my heart will not be quiet,
But, in a "purple riot,"
Keeps ever madly beating
At the thought of that sweet meeting,
When she cometh with the summer o'er the sea ;
All the sweetness of the south
On the roses of her mouth,
All the fervour of its skies
In her gentle northern eyes,
As she cometh, my beloved, home to me !

No more, o' nights, the shivering north complains,
But blithe birds twitter in the crimson dawn ;
No more the fairy frost-flowers fret the panes,
But snowdrops gleam by garden-path and lawn ;
And at times a white cloud wingeth
From the southland up, and bringeth
A warm wind, odour-laden
From the bowers of that fair Aden,
Where she lingers by the blue Tyrrhenian Sea ;
And I turn my lips to meet
Its kisses faint and sweet ;
For I know from hers they've brought
The message, rapture-fraught :
“ I am coming, love, with summer, home to thee ! ”

THE STUDENT TO HIS WIFE.

LET them grovel o'er their gains,

Basely used, as basely got—

Narrow hearts and shallow brains !

Surely *such* we envy not.

A truer, nobler wealth is ours :

Wealth in immortal books that lies ;

In memories of exalting hours

Of converse with the good and wise ;

In wants and sympathies that draw

Our nature heavenward—as the flower,

Obedient to the eternal law,

Is sunward bent in shine and shower ;

In aims that through the darkest night
Of sorrow burn with steadfast glow ;
In hopes that, like the solar light,
Change tears to rainbows as they flow ;

In faith that turns the carking care—
The weakness, weariness, and pain
Of common life—to praise and prayer,
Till Eden blooms for us again !

And scarcely should we start to see
An angel meet us in our walk,
Or hear celestial melody
Blend with our quiet evening talk.

Such are the riches, gentle wife,
That, showered upon us from on high,
Have shed a sweetness round our life
Their barren millions could not buy,

And still will shed—whate'er betide—

While unpolluted by the stain

Of worldly avarice or pride

The garments of our souls remain.

Then let us strive to keep them pure,

And, hand in hand, with single heart—

Rich in God's love, and only poor

In what we scorn—so do our part,

That Here the good may call us friend—

And, when the parting hour hath come,

The spirits of the blest may bend

From Heaven to give us welcome HOME !

TO THE SUMMER WIND.

I.

THOU wanderer of the summer air !
Thou spirit wild and free !
In what shadowy region far and fair
May thy viewless dwelling be ?
Beneath yon crispèd clouds that sleep
On the verge of the western sea ?
Beyond the clouds ? or beyond the deep,
Unfathomed blue of immensity,
Is it there thou makest thy halcyon home
When the joyous day is done—
Lapt in some bright, elysian dome

By thy sister genii spun,
Of starry beams,
Or the lingering gleams
Of the purple-shrouded sun ?

II.

I know not :—and thou singest ever
An inarticulate song,
Like the voice of a quiet river
Gliding by moonlight along,
With magic music, soft and deep,
As echoes from the world of sleep !—
But this I know, that thou art fair,
For I have seen thee in my dreams,
With parted lips and streaming hair,
Gliding in beauty down the streams
Of the azure noontide air ;
Or underneath the harvest moon,
To the mossy rills below,
Singing a weird and wayward tune

While the foam-bells come and go,
Glitteringly with endless motion,
Like fairy ships on a fairy ocean !

III.

Nor boots it where thy home may be :—
Beyond the clouds, or beneath the sea ;
Among the Sons of Power who guide
The planets in their fleet career ;
Or with the Naiades who glide,
With blue eyes soft and clear,
Through the glimmering flowers
Of the ocean bowers :—
I feel that thou art here !
And, like a lover's when he knows
The lady of his love is near,
Swiftly my life-blood ebbs and flows
With an inexplicable fear—
A honeyed anguish, a delight
That aches, a yearning infinite,—

Doubts, hopes, and wishes strangely blent
In sweet, contenting discontent !

IV.

I see thee not, I clasp thee not ;
Yet feel I thou art nigh,
Shedding around this lonely spot
The dews of melody ;
Shedding from thine ærial wings,
And from thy swift and viewless feet,
A shower of dulcet murmurings,
And wandering odours faint and sweet,
That steal about my soul, and lull
To peace its wailings sorrowful
With a delicious calm, a rest
Which even to dream were to be blest :
Although its very sweetness wrings
The heart with strange, mysterious pain—
Moving upon the frozen springs
Of feeling, till their waters rain

In burning tear-drops from the eye,
I feel not how—I know not why !
Nor know I if 'tis joy or woe
Impels them in their fiery flow.
But this I wote : that sweeter far
Than all delights of sense they are ;
That rather would I dwell with thee
Alone in these green solitudes,
Than share the loud world's thoughtless glee,
Thou minstrel of the summer woods !—
Thou whisperer by the summer sea !
For thou in all my spirit's moods
Hast still a spirit-sympathy,
Love-taught, I fondly will believe !
Or never could thy tranced voice
With such delicious sadness grieve ;
With such wild mirth rejoice !

v.

Ha ! art thou fled ?—I felt but now

Thy faint lips kiss my wooing brow ;
Felt thy far-floating locks with mine
Their odorous tresses intertwine
With soothing freshness ; heard thy song
Amid the leaves, around, above—
Now like the stifled breath of love.
When eyes are dim, and fond lips press
The first sweet grape of tenderness—
Low, tremulous and long !
Now like the tinkling of a rill
That falls into a lake—
Some tiny tarn upon a hill
That fairy Mab her bath might make,
If she and her fantastic train
Should ever roam the earth again !
Now like the song of summer birds—
The mingling song of birds and bees ;
Now like the long-forgotten words
Recalled by whispering twilight trees
In July gloamings, when alone

We muse on loved ones changed or gone ;
Now like the echoes of a flute
 Heard in some leafy dell,
Low-warbling till the birds are mute ;
 Now like a distant bell,
Whose saintly summons, silvery-clear,
Falls on the homeward boatman's ear,
 At twilight's holy hour,
From out the depths of the rosy air,
Calling his soul to silent prayer
 With still, small voice of power !

THE APOLLO OF THE VATICAN.

GOD of the golden locks and beamy brow !
 Embodied splendour ! Phœbus-Apollo ! Thou,
 Time-born, but heir of immortality !
 Still stand'st thou radiant—like a mighty star,
 Darting supernal effluence afar
 O'er the slow stream of change, that, rolling by,
 Hath swept from earth Religions, Peoples, Crowns—
 Like vapour down into the silent sea
 Of grey Oblivion—leaving uninjured Thee,
 Its marble conqueror ! Still that proud lip frowns
 In scornful triumph o'er thy prostrate foe,
 The earth-spawned Python, Mutability !
 Still from that stern, indomitable eye
 The arrowy lightnings flash that laid the reptile low.

A CONFESSION.

No, Buonarroti, thou shalt not subdue
 My mind with thy Thor-hammer ! All that play
 Of ponderous science, with Titanic thew
 And spastic tendon—marvellous, 'tis true !—
 Says nothing to my soul. Thy “terrible way”
 Has led enow of worshippers astray ;
 I will not walk therein ! Nor yet shalt thou,
 Majestic Raphael,—though before thee bow
 The nations, with their tribute of renown,—
 Lead my heart captive. Great thou art, I own,—
 Great—but a Pagan still. But Here—breathe low,
 The place is hallowed—here, Angelico !
 Heart, mind, and soul, with reverent love, confess
 The Christian Painter ; sent to purify and bless !

ST PETER'S :

A TYPE.

AND this is San Pietro ! This the shrine
 Where, for so many centuries, have bowed
 In abject awe the unreflecting crowd
 Of votaries—even as to a thing divine !
 But men begin to know thee now, and smile
 At their past blindness : seeing thee most vile,
 Despite thy braggart bulk and vulgar waste
 Of precious things—faith, genius, energy—
 Most precious they of all ; and most misplaced
 Thus dedicate, prodigious Sham, to Thee !—
 Within, without, o'erwritten with the name
 Of the crowned Beast, and blazoned with the shame
 Of his pollution ! Shall it long be so,
 Just Heaven ?—My heart is sick and angry ; let us go !

AT VERONA.

THE moon is full, as on that balmy night
 When love-lorn Juliet called her Romeo
 In maiden-treble, tremulous and low :
 Half sigh, half song ; and from the odorous gloom
 Of myrtle boughs and jasmine rich with bloom
 His voice made answer through the silvery light,
 In proud Verona, here, so long ago !—
 Now, other echoes fill thy outraged halls :
 The heavy tramp of Austrian sentinels ;
 The ceaseless drum-roll, and the signal's boom
 From fort to fort. The clanking of the chain
 That holds thee—but not long shall hold !—in thrall,
 Fair city ! Thy blind Despot strives in vain ;
 Freedom is on the march !—Dost hear her trumpet
 call ?

AT FLORENCE.

FROM Bellos-guardo as the sun went down
I gazed on queenly Florence where she lay
Smiling among her olives, silvery grey ;
Like topaz gleamed her many-towerèd crown ;
And like some golden river of the blest,
Swept Arno by her marble palaces,—
Through plains more fair than musing Fancy sees
In sunset heavens,—towards the golden west.
But not her loveliness, nor that which claims
A wider homage from a subject world—
Her proud aureola of deathless names !
Made my heart glow :—I saw a flag unfurled
In the clear air : the Flag of Italy !
That told of Tyrants crushed and a Great People Free !

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